We investigate matrix *why*-questions in Italian from a Lexical-Functional Grammar perspective and integrate the findings into a grammar fragment using the Xerox Linguistic Environment (XLE). The focus is set on word order variation in matrix *why*-questions, and mainly on the asymmetry between *perché* (‘why’) and so-called “bare” *wh*-elements (Bocci & Pozzan, 2014):

(1)  
    Dove {*Anna} abit-a {Anna}?  
    where {*Anna} live-PRS.3SG {Anna}  
    ‘Where does Anna live?’

(2)  
    Perché {Anna} abit-a a Milano {, Anna}?  
    Why {Anna} live-PRS.3SG in Milan? {Anna}  
    ‘Why does Anna live in Milan?’

(3a)  
    Gianni mi ha appena portato il libro.  
    John to-me AUX.3SG just bring.PST.PTCP the book.  
    ‘John has just brought me the book.’

(3b)  
    Perché te l’ha portato Gianni  
    why to-you CL.3SG.M-AUX.3SG bring.PST.PTCP John  
    (e non Leo)?  
    and not Leo  
    ‘Why did John bring it to you and not Leo?’

(3c)  
    #Perché Gianni te l’ha portato Gianni  
    why John to-you CL.3SG.M-AUX bring.PST.PTCP Gianni  
    (e non Leo)?  
    and not L.  
    ‘Why did John bring it to you and not Leo?’

Although sentences (1) and (2) both contain a fronted *wh*-element, the relative orders of verb and subject differ substantially: while the subject can never precede the verb with a “bare” *wh*-element like dove and must instead appear postverbally (1), the preverbal position is acceptable and in fact unmarked with *perché* (2). In a derivational approach, Rizzi (1996, 2006) argues that “bare” *wh*-elements only meet the WH-criterion by moving to the left periphery of the clause across the subject (“Subject-Verb-Inversion”). In contrast, *perché* is directly merged in a higher position that does not trigger movement, namely SpecInt(rogative). Hence, interrogative “Subject-Verb-Inversion” does not obtain. Moreover, Bocci & Pozzan (2014) point out that questions of the kind presented in (3b) – introduced by *perché*, with the Subject in postverbal position – allow for the subject to get a focus interpretation. This reading is unavailable for preverbal subjects (3c). The choice between a pre-verbal and post-verbal subject in *wh*-questions with *perché* thus depends on information structure, as in declarative sentences:

(4a)  
    Gianni ha telefonato.  
    John AUX.3SG call.PST.PTCP  
    ‘John called.’

(4b)  
    Ha telefonato Gianni.  
    AUX.3SG call.PST.PTCP John.  
    ‘John called.’

The subject in (4b) can receive a narrow (information) focus interpretation by occupying a postverbal position. The same reading is unavailable for preverbal subjects (4a), which are interpreted as topics. In interrogatives with “bare” *wh*-elements like (1), the subject is "marginalized" (cf. Antinucci & Cinque 1991; Cardinaletti 1998): it is realized to the right of the verb (complex), de-stressed and interpreted as presupposed information. Moreover, *perché* is compatible with a contrastive focus in the left periphery (5a), differently from a 'bare' *wh*-item like quando:
In our contribution, we propose an analysis of Italian *wh*-questions which does not draw on syntax specific movement triggers to predict word order asymmetries, but instead integrates c- and f-structural constraints with i-structural information. Building on Bromberger’s (1992: 145-169) analysis of English *wh*-questions, we assume that the presupposition associated with ‘bare’-*wh*-item questions differs from the presupposition associated with *perché*-questions: the former is an ‘open’ proposition where an operator binds a variable, whereas the latter is simply a ‘closed’ proposition without a bound variable. This difference is reflected at both c-, f- and i-structure. Both “bare” *wh*-items and left-peripheral contrastive foci, instantiating a genuine operator-variable configuration, are inserted in a c-structural position associated with a functional uncertainty path that introduces a partition between FOCUS and BACKGROUND at the level of i-structure. Accordingly, in a structure like (1) *dove* “where” corresponds to FOCUS, whereas the subject must be realized in a position associated to BACKGROUND. Crucially, the pre-verbal (i.e., [Spec, IP]) position is not such a position, since it is associated with the discourse function TOPIC. On the other hand, *perché* is inserted in a higher c-structure position hosting sentential operators corresponding to clause-level ADJ’s, and which is not annotated with a functional uncertainty path. Subsequently, no i-structure partition between FOCUS and BACKGROUND is introduced, and subjects are free to be positioned in c-structure nodes corresponding to TOPIC or BACKGROUND (the pre-verbal and post-verbal positions in (2) respectively), or contrastive FOCUS (the post-verbal position in (3b)). The present analysis also correctly predicts that only *perché*, but not “bare” *wh*-items, is compatible with the presence of a contrastive focus in the left periphery. Note, however, that in sentences like (6) *perché* is ambiguous (cf. Rizzi 2001: 295): while it has matrix (semantic) scope in both readings, it is construed as an ADJ of the matrix PRED in reading #1, but as an ADJ of the embedded PRED in reading #2.

We propose that in long construals (= reading #2), *perché* has to be inserted in the c-structure position otherwise occupied by “bare” *wh*-items and contrastive foci, which can identify its syntactic dependency to the embedded PRED and ultimately the value of its presupposition. Figure 1 and 2 illustrate the differing f-structure outputs from the grammar fragment for sentences (1) and (2).

**References**
“Dove abita Anna?”

Figure 1: F-Structure Representation of Sentence (1), ‘Dove abita Anna?’ – ‘Who loves Anna?’

“Perché Anna abita a Milano?”

Figure 2: F-Structure Representation of Sentence (2), ‘Perché Anna abita a Milano?’ – ‘Why does Anna live in Milan?’